precaution of reducing the monetary expansion so that the inflation comes dswn to less than elght per cent, which he is trying to promise? So, would he try to bring down the monetary expansion and bring down the prices in the near future?

SHRI MANMOHAN SINGH: Sir, we have, in fact, taken steps to moderate the growth of the net Reserve Bank credit to the Central Government. For example, the net Reserve Bank credit to the Central Government in the current financial year, until the month of July, is only 5.5 per cent as against 19.6 per cent during the corresponding period of the previous year. Similarly, the growth of reserve money has also declined in the course of this year from 11.5 per cent. This year, thus far, the growth rate is no more than 7.3 per cent. The Reserve Bank of India, being worried about the monetary expansion, have taken measures to raise the cash reserve ratio, and has immobilized a part of the surplus money available with the banking system. With regard to the general issue, certainly we should aim to bring the inflation rate to much lower than eight per cent, but it takes time to achieve this result. I, however, have no doubt that in the coming months there will be a substantial abatement of inflationary pressures and inflationary expectations.

SHRI MADAN BHATIA: Sir, I should like to be enlightened by the hon. Finance Minister on one aspect. There is growth in production in the industrial and agricultural sectors. There is a tremendous growth in the exports from this country. There is a tremenodus increase in the foreign exchange reserves. Therefore, I believe that the rupee has become very strong qua the foreign currencies. If my understanding is correct, I want the hon. Finance Minister to enlighten why the value of the foreign currencies like pound and dollar continues to remain the same qua the rupee as it was when the rupee was very weak.

SHRI MANMOHAN SINGH: Sir, we unified the exchange rate of the rupee last year. At that time, when the rupee was unified, a lot of our critics predicted that the rupee would depreciate. Some people predicated that the rupte would go down to Rs. 50 to a dollar. Now, in effect, I think, we have proved all those prophets of gloom wrong. The rupee has remained remarkably stable.

It is certainly true that if the Reserve Bank of India had not intervened in the market, the rupee would have further strengthened its value, but, then, we have to worry about the consequences of that strengthening on India's export competitiveness. Therefore, the intervention of the Reserve Bank of India was justified because we did not want India's exoorts to suffer in the process.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTION

Income-tax assessees

*221. SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total number of Income-tax assessees in the country by the end of March, 1994;

(b) what is the number in different slabs; and

(c) the number of arrear cases as on 31st March, 1994 alongwith the outstanding amount and action taken to reduce the number?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY): (a) The total number of income-tax assessees as on 31-3-1994 was 102.06 lakhs. In additions there were 13.71 lakhs of salaried assessees, who had paid taxes by way of tax deduction at source and also 1.96 lakhs who had paid tax under the Presumptive Tax Scheme under section 115K of the Income-tax Act, 1961.

(b) Based upon the number of returns processed during the financial year

1993-94, and the income returned therein, the approximate number of assessees in different slabs of income ars as follows:—

Slabs of Income	No. of assesseex (In lakhs)
Company Cases	
less than Rs. 50,000 . .	0.92
Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 5 lakhs .	0.10
Rs. 5 lakhs to Rs. 10 lakhs .	0.49
dle than Rs. 10 lakhs . .	0.23
Non-Company Cases	
less than Rs. 2 lakhs . .	85.97
Rs. 2 lakhs to Rs. 5 lakhs .	0.28
Rs. 5 lakhs to Rs. 10 .akhs .	0.16
More than Rs. 10 lakhs . .	0.14

(c) The total outstanding demand as on 31-3-1994 in respect of Income-tax and Corporation-tax was Rs. 13,360.26 crores. The number of arrear cases as on 31-3-1994 is still under compilation. However, the number of such cases as on 31-3-1993 was 38,10,428.

The following steps are taken to reduce the arrears:

(i) high priority is given to the work of reduction of arrear demand;

(ii) in cases involving demands of Rs. 1 lakh and above dossiers are maintained and collection is monitored regularly;

(iii) appellate authorities including the Courts are regularly moved for early disposal of appeals/vacation of stays wherever granted;

(iv) Coercive measures like attachment and sale of property, levy of penalty, etc. are also taken in suitable cases.

Failure rtae of switching systems

*224. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:
SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of complaints from technicians that failure rates of switching systems offered by multinationals like Siemens etc. are much higher than those developed by C-DOT; and

(b) if so, what is the data available with Government on this?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Not applicable in view of (a) above.

Recommendations on the Ram Mohan Rao Committee on Small & Medium Newspapers

*226. SHRI MOHAMMED AFZAL alias MEEM AFZAL: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken by the Government to implement the recommendations of Ram Mohan Rao Committee on the small and medium newspapers submitted to Government on the 27th December, 1990; and

(b) the measures taken by Government to improve the financial status of small newspapers in regional languages?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO): (a) Out of 12 recommendations made by the Committee, 11 have been accepted with some minor modifications in some cases. Statement-I thereof is laid on the Table of the House. (See below)

(b) Statement-II giving details of facilities which have some bearing on financial status of small newspapers including those in regional languages is laid on the Table of the House.